1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 * SR9 Carib SR9

291 511 Above the falls at Towakaima, however, there are no shops, and at the time of my first visit, in December, 1932, only one or two prospectors. So the Indians of the upper Barama had no trade cloth for the making of sophisticated garments; women had no dresses, nor did the men have trousers. It is, therefore, the dress of these Indians which I shall describe, and it must be remembered that the description holds good for many individuals throughout the entire area, individuals who have not the means to procure the rudiments of European dress. Throughout the whole region the men usually use only a loin cloth for daily wear, even in cases where trousers or shirts are owned for "dressing up." The women, [797] on the other hand, having been instructed in Christian modesty by the good officers of the now defunct mission stations at St. Bede's and Kokerite, wear the European type of clothing more generally than the men. The dress, however, seems to be more an article of pride than a guardian of modesty. After becoming used to my presence the ladies did not hesitate to lay aside their dresses when doing heavy work which might tear or soil the garments. (See Plates 9, *b*-11, *a*, for different types of men's and women's clothing.)

The man's lap or loin cloth is called wokuru kamisharu. It is [828] almost always made of red cloth. Red appeals to the men's color sense, but also the Indians believe on the basis of experience that the red dye fades less quickly than other types. The strip of cloth is about eight inches wide and varies in length according to the size of the owner. A total length of forty inches is sufficient to allow pendant ends front and rear of a proper length on 291 a medium-sized man. Each end is decorated with a fringe of home- 531 spun cotton yarn called epururu (end thing) or sesururu (fuzzy thing). If beads are available a band of bead work may be worked into the fringe at its base. At each end of the cloth proper is usually a stripe of appliqué made of small bits of differently colored cloths sewn together and upon each other to form a pattern. These patterns (called piepaitu or piekono) have no extraneous significance at the present time. Usually the fringe on the end of the loin cloth which hangs down in back is carried up along each side of the cloth about two inches, thus distinguishing the front and the rear ends for the wearer.

291 The loin cloth is drawn between the legs and supported front

* [i.e., trading shops run by foreigners — Analyst]

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 SR9 Carib SR9

524 trays (as described by Roth).[1] Tops of the humming or singing
857 variety are unknown on the Barama. Children of both sexes amuse themselves with making figures of string on their fingers. I have simply noted this fact without attempting to investigate the patterns followed, inasmuch as Roth has treated the subject of string figures rather exhaustively.[2]

A game which one is surprised to encounter in this region is the hoop and stick game, played by small children. The game is called onambatoba tonomi. The stick is called wiwimi, and the hoop tondori. A hoop about a foot in diameter is rolled along the ground by one player while the opponent attempts from a given distance to cast a slender lance-like stick, three or four feet long, through the hoop without touching it. The players alternate in throwing the stick and rolling the hoop.

Children also play with stilts. Each stilt is made of one piece of wood with the footrest not more than a foot above the ground. It is a question as to whether or not stilts have been introduced by outsiders.

527 The social occasion par excellence for young and old alike is the drinking spree. This affair takes place when a newly married couple moves into their house, when a house has been newly completed, when distinguished visitors come to the settlement, and otherwise as frequently as the supply of cassava and other field products will permit the manufacture of drink. During the months of December and January the cassava is most plentiful, and it is during this period that the sprees are held most frequently. In-
[527] dians on the lower river who have come in contact with missionaries connect this period in a vague way with the word "Kissmuss" (Christmas), but the coincidence of dates is apparently purely accidental.

A spree is always given by an individual family, of which the members act as hosts. Invitations are sent out to others of the settlement and frequently to relatives and friends in other settlements. Travelers are usually informed of the date of an impending spree on their line of march, and spare no effort to arrive in time. Once he has started "spreeing" nothing will persuade an Indian to leave until the drink is exhausted. Boat hands working for me

[1] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, p. 496.
[2] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, Chap. 24.

*177 independent of regular contact with regional transportation and
175 communication.
439

Nevertheless, the relationships Baird established during this period are critical to our analysis. Over the years, he clearly became the middleman through whom a local economy interfingered with
175 the regional economy. He supplied limited employment opportunities
*177 and market outlets. Thus, a number of Amerindians left aside sub-
464 sistence farming and depended on the wage work he provided. Others sought occasional employment, and still others supplied provisions for those engaged in mining activities. All of this had an important impact on the Amerindian population.

*177 In effect, Baird became a patron of Amerindian clients. As such,
175 he was subsequently the person through whom government services were
466 introduced and government support was elicited. During the later
659 years of Baird's gold mining activities, government health care was first introduced. The support elicited was a call for Amerindian votes. Eventually, when Baird gave up mining, he assumed an official role as government employee. His position as the broker controlling access to the Amerindians in the Upper Barama was clearly underscored by the missionary attempt to establish a similar relationship.

Missionaries

175 The Pilgrim Holiness Church Corporation is a fundamentalist
*177 organization based in the midwestern United States. They have been
• 997 active in Guyana at least since the early 1920's. Their early activities were on the coast and later expanded into the interior.

175 *179 • 799 The brief existence of their mission in the Upper Barama River area is recorded only by a few poorly remembered portions of dogma. The health services, occasional employment opportunities, clothing, ammunition, and food commodities the mission provided had a far greater impact.

In 1963, a reverend from the Pilgrim Holiness Church established a mission at Baramita Air Strip. He came alone at first to make a camp. Later he brought his family. In 1965, this family was replaced by another missionary family. Also, a nurse came to open a [726] clinic. In the spring of 1969, following the unsuccessful Rupununi Rebellion,[3] the missionaries left Baramita Air Strip as requested by the Government. The abandoned missionary buildings and twenty acres of ground were later incorporated into community development service.

[659] The isolationist program of the Pilgrim Holiness Church was in conflict with the Government's goal of Amerindian integration. They disclosed a strategy of imposing their mission as the exclusive link between the Amerindian people and outside influences. Accordingly, they were equipped with independent means of communication and transportation - a radio phone and a small plane. With these, the missionaries were free to disregard national boundaries in their efforts to secure a congregation by providing for the material wants and needs of the Amerindians.

However, the missionaries came too late in the history of the Upper Barama River to compete as middlemen in controlling access to the Amerindians. With their limited resources, they were unable to

175 co-opt the permanent exchange relationships which Baird had already
*177 established. The missionaries' greatest success had been with those
● 999 few people living at the Air Strip who were not immediately affected by the local mining economy. Furthermore, Baird, with his long standing allegiance to Guyanese nationalism, had always acted as the emissary for the Government in the region. In contrast, the American missionaries operated internationally in the promotion of their own interests. Clearly, Baird was the obvious choice for government
(648) support in this strhtegic frontier outpost close to the Venezuelan border, particularly since 1962 when Venezuela reopened a border dispute along the North West District.[4]

175 International events have made the remote Upper Barama River area
*177 strategic to Guyana's national development. In order to secure the
659 hinterland, programs have been designed to tie these areas to the national political economy. In the Upper Barama area, this goal has been implemented by a settlement project at Baramita Air Strip.

The Baramita Air Strip Settlement

175 Late in 1969, Baird ceased mining operations altogether. His
*177 imminent withdrawal from the area would have left many impoverished Amerindians exposed to the potential of Venezuelan influence. It was also important not to abandon the air strip close to the
*177 Venezuelan frontier for other than Guyanese use. Thus, government
175 programs were introduced with new resources administrated by new
659 personnel. Baird moved to Baramita Air Strip where he assumed a
361 salaried position as Project Officer in the Department of Interior

*177 175 438 443 The trade store was the main vehicle for the involvement of the remainder of the population in regional exchange. With the establishment of Baird's enterprise, there was a constant call for local foods which the trade store stocked. Caribs not employed at the mine were then able to sell these foods on a more or less planned basis. The residents of Aranka, Baramita, and later the Air Strip, did this regularly. Caribs in the more remote settlements made more infrequent trips. However, the quantities required were limited. No special fields were cut nor special crops planted. Part of the regular subsistence production was used for these exchange purposes. Also, there operated informal consignment agreements. When a supply of meat, cassava, plantains, yams, or whatever ran low, individual men were invited to bring these to the store. Often no money changed [439] hands. Rather, small accounts were kept. In addition to exchanges centralized by the trade store, some exchanges occurred directly 175 between Caribs. The prices used were those at the trade store. Also, *177 for a short time, the missionaries contributed to the market oppor- 799 tunities in the area by occasionally hiring a few laborers, by buying 439 some local handicraft items, and by selling food and clothing.

*177 175 657 622 Before the mine closed in 1969, one other development occurred which further involved this population in regional exchange networks. A local administrative structure, devised and implemented by the Ministry of Local Government, has been imposed on Amerindian populations to promote national political integration.[3] Amerindian [666] offices were first introduced among the Upper Barama River Caribs with an election held at In Time in October 1967. From among four